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## LOCAL MEETINGS AND OTHER NOTICES.

NEW ORLEANS BRANCH. — *May 7, 1894.* The Branch met at Tulane Hall. Professor Fortier presiding. The Secretary read a paper by Mr. J. A. Watkins of New Orleans, which proved of great local interest, Mr. Watkins having been brought up, in the early part of the century, in contact with this tribe, whose name is now almost a tradition in this part of the country.

The esteem of the Choctaw for the white man, who has robbed them of their lands, is embodied in the expression "Oklanahullo," — beloved people. They were a moral people until they came in contact with the white man, and when he first knew them they were honest and truthful, holding in contempt the man who spoke with a "forked tongue." Their laws were few, but rigidly enforced, especially those against homicide, whilst minor offences were sometimes punished with stripes. Mr. Watkins illustrated the rigid way in which homicide was punished by the law of the tribe, which was "blood for blood," by a couple of anecdotes which were very interesting.

The wife was a slave, in every sense of the word, to her husband, but the woman simply performed a duty imposed by custom so hallowed by antiquity that its performance was one of her highest pleasures.

Mr. Watkins here introduced a letter from the daughter of Israel Folsom, who for forty-five years was a missionary amongst the Choctaws, and which went to prove his contention that they were a moral people, and had a religious code. Their funeral customs were described, and their belief that the spirit of the dead lingered around the home for three days received ample treatment.

In early times traders were permitted to marry into the nation, and from these alliances were descended some of the first families, but he never knew a case of amalgamation with the negro, and this received proof from the testimony of Mr. Halbert, superintendent of Indian schools in Mississippi, who also furnished Mr. Watkins with an extremely interesting account of a marriage at which he had been a guest, and which was performed according to the ancient custom.

When Bienville visited Louisiana he found a colony of Indians of various tribes, which were neither traders nor agriculturists, except to a limited extent. Among some of these tribes war was a pastime, whilst others were more peaceable, cultivating in a rude fashion a few acres of corn and tobacco. This colony spoke different languages, but had united for mutual protection against the Comanches and other tribes, whose depredations sometimes extended to Mississippi. Of this colony of tribes the Choctaws alone exist as a nation to-day, although fragments of other tribes may still be met with in Rapides and other parishes. On the arrival of the French this colony was broken up, although a majority accompanied the Choctaws of Mississippi and became so amalgamated that they lost their identity. A few Choctaws may still be found at Bay St. Louis, where the women engage in making baskets, while the men hunt and play the loafer.

The little community which was settled here gave a name to their little village, now the site of New Orleans, quite as appropriate to-day as when adopted by the early inhabitants. The name is "Balbانهa," which literally means "the place where there is intelligible talk." The Choctaw language has given names to many of the creeks which empty into the gulf, also to towns, counties, and rivers in other parts of Mississippi, but these have mostly become so corrupted that none but an educated Choctaw could give their correct interpretation. In conclusion of his most interesting paper Mr. Watkins gave a description of an early form of mortuary customs of the tribe which had been extracted from a manuscript of Nathaniel Folsom, and had been sent to him by a grandchild of the writer. The custom was very curious. A scaffold was erected near the home, just high enough to be safe from the dogs, upon which the body was placed on its side and covered with a blanket. It there remained until decayed. Then the "bone-picker," after taking off the flesh, placed the bones in a box. The head was adorned and was also put in the box, which was placed in the "bone-house," — a house set apart near the edge of the town. In the fall and spring the people gathered to weep over the bones of the dead. The two families, relatives of the dead, would meet, and on one day one family would weep and mourn and the other would dance; on the second day the proceedings were reversed, so that all mourned. The bones were then brought out and wept over and were then replaced in the "bone-house," and the "bone-pickers" received presents. Mr. Watkins said that he had witnessed only one Indian burial, and that was of a child. For several days afterward the women came and seated themselves round the grave, drew their blankets over their heads and chanted in low notes. That chant had lived long in his memory, but the words were so obscure that they have left only a faint trace.

On the conclusion of the paper a most interesting discussion took place amongst the members, in which Colonel Preston Johnston, Mr. Rogers, Miss Ogden, and Mr. Beer took part.

In answer to Colonel Preston Johnston, Mr. Watkins said that he was born in 1808, and came in contact with the tribe in 1813. Colonel Johnston then referred to the fact that the founder of the Tulane University was a trader with the Choctaws, and it was through this trade that he made the greater part of his money. The Choctaws, he said, stood high in point of intellect, ranking next to the Aztecs of Mexico. After them came the Natchez, who were exterminated as a tribe in 1731. Mr. Watkins said that the government, on account of the perpetual feuds between the two tribes, placed the Creeks as far apart as possible from the Choctaws in the reservation. In answer to Mr. Beer, he stated that there were two towns in the Creek reservation where the Natchez language was still spoken.

Colonel Johnston proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Watkins for his most admirable paper, which the members cordially indorsed. At the conclusion of the meeting the president gave out that the next meeting, and the last of the session, would be held on the first Monday in June.

(A paper of Mr. Watkins, on "The Choctaws in Mississippi," containing

the letter of Mr. Halbert alluded to, will be found in the March number of "The American Antiquarian.")

MONTREAL BRANCH. — *February 12, 1894.* The Branch met at the house of Dr. W. Grieve Nichol, Professor Penhallow in the chair. Dr. H. M. Patton read a paper on some interesting phases of Irish folk-lore. Dr. Nichol gave an entertaining account of the usages associated with the keeping of Guy Fawkes's day in Marblehead, Mass. Miss Blanche L. Macdonell contributed an outline of a tale of the soil, comprising a Canadian legend, based on the essential features of the popular life of French Canada, dealing with the vicissitudes and hardships encountered by the voyageurs and hunters in that life of the woods which belonged to pioneers of the old régime.

The following officers for 1894 were elected at the January meeting: President, Mr. John Reade; First Vice-President, Mr. W. J. White; Second Vice-President, Mr. K. Boissevain; Secretary, Mr. F. E. Came; Treasurer, Dr. H. M. Patton; Ladies' Committee, Mrs. Robert Reid, Mrs. Beaugrand, Mrs. Fortier, Mrs. Boissevain, Miss Blanche Macdonell.

*March 12.* The meeting took place at the house of Mrs. Saxe on Luke Street. Mr. Boissevain in the chair at first, and afterwards Mr. White. The Secretary notified the meeting that the following have been elected Corresponding Members of this branch, by the Managing Committee: Mr. Faucher St. Maurice, Quebec; J. M. Lemoine, Quebec; J. E. Roy, Levis; L. P. Lemay, Quebec; Benjamin Sulte, Ottawa; Dr. George Stewart, Quebec; Dr. Kingsford, Ottawa; James Bain, Toronto Public Library; Dr. George Bryce, Winnipeg; Charles Mair, Edmonton; John McLean, Fort McLeod, Calgary; Dr. Charles G. D. Roberts, Windsor, N. S.; Dr. George Patterson, Pictou, N. S.; Rev. Moses Harvey, St. John's, N. F.; Henry Mott, Montreal.

A motion was carried as follows: Resolved, that By-Law No. 5 be amended by adding the following clause: When three members agree to join the Society at the same time and are proposed and seconded by the same members, they may elect to receive only one copy of the Journal, and their subscription shall be the same as those for members of one family. This amendment came from the Board of Management through the sub-committee.

After some discussion a motion was made and carried to lay the amendment on the table. The meeting then listened to a paper read by Professor Penhallow, in the absence of the author, Dr. Robert Bell of Ottawa. The paper was entitled "Some Objibwe Legends," and was of great interest. In the middle and at the end of the paper the meeting was favored by Miss Hall with some Indian music rendered on the piano. This music was thought to resemble much of the Japanese music, and consisted of the following pieces: a dance song, a love song, Wawan choral, solemn procession of peace pipes around the lodge after the pipes are raised, dance son of a chief's society, song of dismissal, and final song when raising the pipes. The rest of the evening was spent in a social way.

*April 13.* Mr. Henry Mott was called on to read a paper on "All

Fools' Day." The practice of playing practical jokes, belonging to this day, was illustrated by examples of the various jests in use. The custom had prevailed, not only in Great Britain, but also in France, Sweden, and Portugal, and had also been regarded as belonging to the ancient Romans and to India. In Scotland April fooling was generally the result of a deliberate or impromptu conspiracy, the object of which is conveyed in the old rhyme : —

This is the first day of April,  
Hunt the gowk another mile.

"Gowk," in this rhyme, is equivalent to "gawk," a cuckoo or simpleton. Mr. Mott remarked that in Canada the old pronunciation of "April" as rhyming with "mile" had not quite gone by among old-fashioned people. A French story related that Francis, Duke of Lorraine, and his wife, being in captivity at Nantes, effected their escape disguised as peasants, simply because the guards received the report that they had been recognized on the streets as an attempt to befool them. The speaker explained the various hypotheses which had been indulged in as to the origin of the custom, and gave references to the usage in English writers from Elizabethan days to the present time.

BOSTON BRANCH. — *April 20.* The Branch met at the house of Mrs. Thomas Mack, 269 Commonwealth Ave. As the portion of the annual programme relating to the discussion of the Shintō religion of Japan could not be carried out, owing to the illness of the intended speaker, it was postponed. Mr. W. W. Newell read a paper prepared by Prof. F. J. Child of Harvard University, relating to the character, origin, and date of old English ballads. The information communicated, of an unpublished character, representing the mature study of the writer, will be contained in an introduction to the writer's work on "English and Scottish Ballads," now approaching completion. Miss Decrow sang several songs and ballads, English and American, which had been preserved for a century or more in family tradition. Mr. Chatschumian of Armenia, who was present as a visitor, made remarks on the folk-lore of that country. The Society elected officers for the ensuing year as follows: President, Prof. F. W. Putnam; Vice-Presidents, Mr. Dana Estes, Dr. J. Walter Fewkes; Secretary, George P. Bradley, M. D., U. S. N.; Treasurer, Mr. Arthur G. Everett; Committee, Mrs. D. H. Coolidge, Mrs. A. G. Everett, Mrs. W. B. Kehew, Mrs. Thomas Mack, Mr. W. W. Newell, Mr. Montague Chamberlain; Auditor, Mr. W. H. Ladd.

*May 18.* The Branch met at the house of Miss Crocker, 319 Commonwealth Ave. The Treasurer read a report and the Secretary presented a general statement, showing the condition of the Branch. The regular subject of the evening was the address on the Shintō religion of Japan, by Mr. N. Kishimoto of Harvard University, the speaker having himself been educated in that faith; the account dwelt more particularly on the present folk-lore of Shintō, while the previous paper had dealt especially with the literature. Addresses were subsequently made by Mr. E. Fennollosa, and

Mr. Percival Lowell, the latter dwelling particularly on the radical mental differences existing in the Oriental and Western imagination.

WISCONSIN BRANCH. — In regard to the organization of this Branch the following circular has been issued : —

The American Folk-Lore Society, organized in 1888, and incorporated under Massachusetts law in 1893, is at present but feebly represented in Wisconsin. It is earnestly hoped that the Wisconsin membership may soon be increased to a number sufficient to warrant the formation of a branch society.

We hope for working members ; but we shall be glad to receive the support of any interested person. All members of the Wisconsin branch will be members of The American Folk-Lore Society, and as such will receive The Journal of American Folk-Lore, published quarterly in the interest of the Society.

The dues are \$3.00, payable January 1st. After the Branch is fully organized, additional dues of perhaps fifty cents a year may be deemed advisable.

It has been suggested that the scope of work in the branch organization be broadened to include local history. If this subject interests you, further information and the explanatory pamphlet of the Society may be obtained by addressing, Gardner P. Stickney, 124 Grand Avenue, Milwaukee, Chairman Organizing Committee, Wisconsin Branch.

THE CHICAGO FOLK-LORE SOCIETY. — This Society held its annual meeting on Friday, May 11, at the house of Mr. Franklin H. Head, 2 Banks Street. The programme consisted of a Symposium on Zmigrodzki's "Swastika Tablet," in which Dr. J. N. Hyde, Dr. Selim H. Peabody, Mr. Lorado Taft, and Prof. Frederick Starr participated. Officers were elected for the ensuing year. The officers for 1894-5 will be as follows: President, Mr. Fred. W. Gookin; Vice-Presidents, Capt. E. L. Huggins, U. S. A., Folk-Lore of the Sioux and cognate tribes; Rabbi E. G. Hirsch, Semitic Folk-Lore; Dr. Washington Mathews, U. S. A., Ceremonies and Symbols; George W. Cable, Creole Folk-Song; Secretary *pro tem.*, Ernest W. Clement, 5529 Monroe Ave.; Treasurer, Miss Elizabeth Head, 2 Banks Street; Directors, Mrs. Fletcher S. Bassett, Mrs. Dr. Sarah H. Stevenson, Mrs. M. F. Wilmarth; Curator, Henry E. O. Heinemann.

THE COLUMBIAN MUSEUM OF CHICAGO. — Dr. Franz Boas, after having arranged the collection which is to serve as the basis of the Columbian Museum of Chicago, has closed his connection with that Institution. It is most deeply to be regretted that this museum should lose the services of a scholar and anthropologist of world-wide fame, whose competency shines out the more in virtue of the almost total lack in America of such acquirements, the sad deficiency of investigators of primitive tradition who bring to the problems of that study an adequate equipment, and in consideration of the prevalent tendency, consequent on the absence of a definite understanding of the nature of the work, to accept mediocrity and second-hand

knowledge as competent to perform the task. In Mr. W. H. Holmes, the Museum will have an excellent archæologist, capable of advancing its interests; but the special field of Dr. Boas is one which perhaps no other American anthropologist can cover.

HAMPTON, VA., FOLK-LORE SOCIETY. — The movement respecting which a circular letter has been printed in this Journal (vol. vi., 1893, pp. 305-309), has resulted in the formation of a Society which promises to be of the utmost usefulness in forwarding research work. This Society, although independent of The American Folk-Lore Society, will probably be affiliated with that Society as a correspondent and contributor to its publications. On the day after the commencement at Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, Friday evening, May 26, the first public meeting of this Society was held in Academy Hall, and was attended by a large audience of the graduates, pupils, and teachers of the School. Mr. W. W. Newell, as Permanent Secretary of The American Folk-Lore Society, made the principal address, pointing out the importance to the negro race of a thorough understanding both of its original African conditions and of the American modification of those conditions, not merely as a matter of curiosity, but as a treasure of perpetual memory. The character of negro music, the results which might flow from its study, and the tendency to the degradation of that music under the influences of the concert room and song-book was particularly dwelt on. Reference was made to the tales and old customs of the race, and to the service to science which might be accomplished by their investigation. After the address, illustrations were given, members of the Society reciting stories, giving illustrations of peculiar types of speech and dialect.

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## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

### BOOKS.

THE LEGENDS OF THE MICMACS. By the Rev. SILAS TERTIUS RAND, D. D., D. C. L., LL. D. Wellesley College Publications. New York and London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1894. Pp. xlvii, 452, 8vo.

Through the generosity of the late Prof. E. N. Horsford, the Library of American Linguistics in Wellesley College came into possession of many valuable manuscripts, purchased from the estate of Dr. Rand, who, after being for forty years a missionary among the Micmac Indians of Nova Scotia, died in the year 1889. To the same benevolent patron are due the means which have enabled the Department of Comparative Philology, under the direction of Prof. Helen L. Webster, who furnishes the interesting introduction, to issue this volume as one of the "Wellesley Philological Publications." The introduction deals with the "manners, customs, language, and literature of the Micmac Indians," and the body of the volume consists of eighty-seven legends and tales, varying from one to twenty pages in length and covering a wide range of subjects. Glooscap, the culture-